

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated March 20, 2006. Claims 14 to 26 are presented for examination, of which claims 14 and 21 are independent. Claims 1 to 12 and 27 to 37 have been withdrawn and cancelled. In addition, claim 13 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejections. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 14 to 26 have been provisionally rejected for nonstatutory obviousness-type double-patenting over claims 16 to 20 of copending application No. 10,773,105 (the '105 application) in view of Applicant's own allegedly admitted prior art. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action contends that claims 16 to 20 of the '105 application "discloses a coupling including a non-threaded end made of steel showing all aspects of the above claims except the use of a counterweight or internal gas passage" and further contends that Applicant's allegedly admitted prior discloses the counterweight and internal gas passage. However, Claims 16 to 20 of the '105 application, either alone or in combination with any of the allegedly admitted prior art, fail to disclose all the features of claims 14 to 26 in the present application. For example, claims 16 to 20 of the '105 application fail to recite a "bore having an end distal the opening and an end proximal the opening, wherein the distal end is tapered and is not threaded" as is recited in independent claims 14 and 21 of the present application.

As such, the claims of the present application recite different and/or additional structural features than what is recited in claims 16 to 20 of the '105 application, and accordingly, are not obvious in view of such claims. For the above reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of the double-patenting rejections are respectfully requested.

Independent claims 14 were both rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Mordue '467, Mordue '247, and Cooper '047. In addition, claim 14 was also rejected over Eckledafer '652, Winsberg et al, Mar et al, and Sparling. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The cited art does not teach or suggest the features of independent claims 14 and 21, and in particular, is not seen to teach or disclose at least the feature of a bore having an opening, the bore for receiving an end of a shaft, the bore having an end distal the opening and an end proximal the opening, wherein the distal end is tapered and is not threaded. In particular, none of the cited art is seen to teach a bore with a distal end that is tapered.

In this regard, Mordue '467 teaches that "the mouth 54 of the coupling member engages and seals against the tapered end 18 of the shaft." (col. 6, lines 51-54). As such, Mordue '467 teaches the use of a tapered shaft, and not a coupling member with a bore that is tapered at the distal end.

With regard to Mordue '247, the Office Action cites to coupling 21 in Figures 1 and 2. However, as can be seen in the Figures, coupling 21 does not have a bore that is tapered at the distal end, but rather the outer wall of the coupling is tapered. Likewise, the couplings shown by Cooper '074, Mars et al., Sparling, and Ecklesdafer '652 also do not have a bore that is tapered at the distal end, but rather the outer wall of the coupling is tapered.

Finally, with regard to Winsberg, the Office Action contends that feature 32 of box collar C is tapered and reads on the claim. However, Winsberg does not teach that feature 32 is tapered, but rather explicitly recites that "the generally *squared off* terminal 32 of the box 18..." As such, no feature of Winsberg is seen to be a coupling with a bore that is tapered at the distal end.

As such, in view of the foregoing remarks, independent claims 14 and 21 are believed to be allowable over the cited art. The remaining claims in the application are each dependent from one of claims 14 or 21 and are also believe to be allowable. As such, the remaining rejection under §102(b) and 103(a) are considered moot.

CONCLUSION

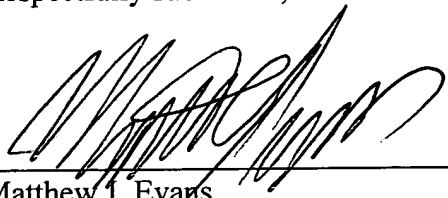
In view of the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if it would in any way advance prosecution of this case.

By making the amendments herein, applicant does not concede to a narrower claim scope than originally sought and reserves the right to prosecute different and/or broader claims in any related application.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-3878.

Respectfully submitted,

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